

WEEKLY CHRONICLE

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Congressman Bob Filner Fights for Family Farms

Congressman Bob Filner took a stand in Washington for family farms and conservation efforts by recently co-sponsoring a bill to protect family-owned ranches and farmland.

"Estate taxes should not force families to sell their farms," said Congressman Filner. "We must protect family-owned farms and ranches, and provide incentives for lasting rangeland conservation."

The estate tax was implemented to ensure that heirs of the wealthiest estates would not benefit unfairly from accumulated

family wealth. Over time, increasing land values have had the unintended consequence of forcing traditional family farms and ranches to pay the estate tax. This has led to many farmers and ranchers having to sell parts of their property to pay the tax, resulting in smaller pieces of property and splitting up land that is important for wildlife habitat and watersheds.

The Family Farm Estate Tax Relief Act, H.R. 5475, would add a provision to the tax code allowing farmers and ranchers to defer payment of the estate tax as long

as the land is owned within the family and remains in agricultural production. There is also a provision that would defer the tax for land placed into a conservation easement.

The bill is supported by the California Cattlemen's Association, the Imperial County Farm Bureau, the California Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, and the California Wildlife Foundation, among others.